

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00429 161540Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /047 W

-----161544Z 064924 /43

R 161500Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2091

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: WHERE'S HUSAK

1. THE TRADITIONAL SIGNAL THAT THE PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS IN RESIDENCE, THE PRESIDENTIAL FLAG FLYING OVER HRADCANY CASTLE, HAS BEEN ABSENT SINCE AT LEAST MIDDAY FEBRUARY 14. HUSAK HAS NOT MADE ANY RECORDED PUBLIC APPEARANCES SINCE FEBRUARY 11, WHEN HE RECEIVED THE VISITING CPSU DELEGATION LED BY CC SECRETARY KAPITONOV. WE ARE HOWEVER, UNAWARE OF ANY FOREIGN TRAVEL SCHEDULED FOR HIM AT THIS TIME.

I ASKED ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER VEJVODA WHETHER THE ABSENCE OF THE FLAG FROM HRADCANY CASTLE AT THIS TIME MEANT THAT PRESIDENT HUSAK WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY ON A VISIT SOMEWHERE. VEJVODA TRIED TO DOWNPLAY THE MATTER, SAYING THE PRESIDENT MIGHT SIMPLY BE "VISITING BRATISLAVA" OR OTHER CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNITIES:

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HE INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT HUSAK WAS STILL IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

2. COMMENT: THE LAST TIME HUSAK LEFT THE COUNTRY UNANNOUNCED WAS NOVEMBER 2 WHEN HE FLEW TO MOSCOW TO GIVE BREZHNEV A HERO OF THE CSSR MEDAL FOR HIS BIRTHDAY. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT HUSAK HAS GONE TO CONSULT WITH THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP ON CHARTER 77 OR MORE MUNDANE ISSUES SUCH AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S

ENERGY NEEDS. THE USSR IS THE ONLY LIKELY DESTINATION ABOUT WHICH HUSAK MIGHT WISH TO MAINTAIN SILENCE, IN ORDER TO AVOID STIMULATING SPECULATION ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HUSAK IS SIMPLY ON VACATION, BUT HIS VACATIONS HAVE USUALLY BEEN ANNOUNCED IN THE PRESS. THE AUSTRIAN EMBASSY HAS INFORMED US THAT A LOCAL SOURCE HAS INDICATED HUSAK WENT TO MOSCOW FEBRUARY 4-5 TO OBTAIN BREZHNEV'S SUPPORT FOR HIS HANDLING OF THE CHARTER 77 SITUATION. IF SO, THIS VISIT WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED THE VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA LAST WEEK BY CPSU CC SECRETARY KAPITONOV. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM OR REJECT THE AUSTRIAN REPORT, WHICH COULD BE SIMPLY ANOTHER ITEM ON THE UNDERSTANDABLY ACTIVE PRAGUE RUMOR CIRCUIT.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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